



**TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**REGARDING Bill 6687
AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES
MARCH 23, 2009**

This testimony is submitted by Lara Herscovitch, Senior Policy Associate at the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a statewide, non-profit organization that works to reduce the number of children and youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice system, and advocates a safe, effective and fair system for those involved.

The Alliance supports Section 4 of Bill No. 6687 which would require districts to accept the credits that children earn within the Department of Children and Families school district (Unified School District #2) in the same way that they must accept credits from any youth re-entering the district, including from the Department of Correction school district (Unified School District #1).

The proposed change is non-controversial, simply correcting an oversight. Children and youth who complete credits while in DCF residential care must be able to transfer those credits with them when they return to their school district. Without this provision, students can return to school from a long-term placement thinking they have earned enough credits to be a junior, and be told that their credits won't transfer and they are still freshmen. This unfair situation creates frustration and the great risk of school dropout – in turn increasing the risk of further delinquency.

School districts are required to accept the credits of a youth entering their system from the Department of Correction school district (USD #1). It is only fair that youth in the juvenile justice system, which is philosophically focused on rehabilitation, receive credit for their educational work as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

2470 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport CT 06605

203-579-2727

www.ctjja.org